

*New York Times Saturday Review of Books:*

Apropos of the present discussion in THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW OF BOOKS, with reference to the mode of procedure in determining names for more or less immortalization in "The Hall of Fame," I beg the courtesy of your columns to relate my personal experience in the effort to induce the one hundred judges to consider the claims of my father, Alfred Vail, to the same recognition that they have accorded S. F. B. Morse, his partner, in the financial and practical features of the erroneously termed "Morse System of Telegraphy."

I think that I am not overstepping the bounds of absolute truthfulness when I state that all who have made any study of the subject are strong in their belief that to Alfred Vail is the world indebted for the elements that have contributed to make the telegraph one of the most prominent aids to civilization, and that to him Morse owes the fame and honor that have come to him.

Having an absolute and abiding faith in my father's claims to equal recognition with Morse by the world, I have, upon the two occasions on which candidates for the Hall of Fame were chosen, presented the name of Alfred Vail, and, that there might be no failure on the part of the one hundred judges to be made aware that another than Morse had equal claims, I personally sent a circular letter to each of these judges. Upon each occasion, when voting was to be done, and after reciting the reasons I had for asking their consideration of my father's name, I stated that it would be my pleasure to furnish them any further information which they might desire.

But to this day not one of these hundred judges has ever expressed a desire for one word of any such information, and my father upon both voting occasions received some fifteen votes. At the time

of the voting in 1906, there were 230 candidates, and it was an absolute physical impossibility for any of these one hundred judges to properly consider the claims of 230 claimants, for but four months intervened between the names being sent in and the decisions reached.

I am not then at all surprised that Mr. Stedman and others of the judges are moving for some other and more correct method of determining who may be entitled, in the opinion of the judges, to enrollment in the Hall of Fame. To my mind, a much smaller number of judges, with opportunities of consultation together upon the names and claims of nominees, and ample time in which to do it, would result in a much more just selection of names. I would suggest that, at least a year in advance of the time of decision, these judges have presented to them the names of candidates.

It would seem as if the one hundred judges voted for the persons of whom they knew and ignored those who were unknown to them.

STEPHEN VAIL.

Atlantic City, N. J., Sept. 18.